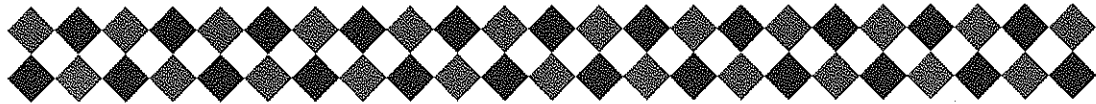




KIDS NOW Evaluation Project

Executive Summary

2007



Executive Summary

The KIDS NOW Initiative was designed to establish and to coordinate supports and services needed to ensure that "all young children in Kentucky are healthy and safe, possess the foundation that will enable school and personal success, and live in strong families that are supported and strengthened within their community" (Governor's Early Childhood Task Force, 1999, p.2).

The 2006-2007 evaluation of the KIDS NOW Initiative demonstrates the rapid implementation of components throughout the state. Additionally, data from this evaluation year reveals the sixth statewide picture of center-based child care program quality in the state of Kentucky. The University of Kentucky evaluated programs using an integration of data (surveys, child assessments, parent questionnaire, and classroom observations) that indicated *five* key findings:

1. *Program type makes a difference in overall classroom quality as well as child outcome scores.*

Significant differences were found between program types for overall program quality including *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales-Revised* and *Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation* for preschool classrooms, and *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating* for infant/toddler classrooms. For preschool classrooms, Head Start programs scored significantly higher than other program types, followed by non-profit and for-profit programs. For infant/toddler classrooms, non-profit programs scored significantly higher than for profit programs.

Children in non-profit centers scored higher than those in for-profit centers on all of the child outcome measures. Significant differences were found between non-profit and for-profit center on the letter naming task, counting, and letter-word identification. Similarly, children in non-profit centers scored significantly higher than children in Head Start on the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test*, *Wood-Cock Johnson Test of Achievement*-applied problems, *Wood-Cock Johnson Test of Achievement*-dictation, and comprehension measures.

2. *Child characteristics, such as subsidy and minority status, have influences on classroom*

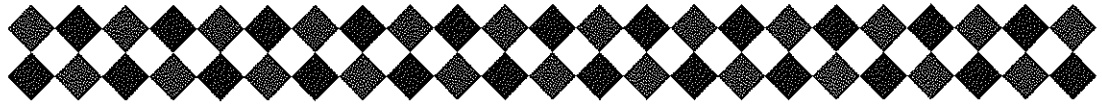
Serving children who receive subsidy is negatively correlated to both ECERS-R and ELLCO quality rating scores. Those programs serving children who receive subsidy scored lower on both ECERS-R and ELLCO overall scores than programs who do not. Programs serving more minority children scored lower on ECERS-R than programs serving fewer minority children.

3. *Participation of KIDS NOW components have influences on infant/toddler classroom quality*

The participation in STARS for KIDS NOW and Healthy Start training lead to higher ITES score.

4. *There is an increased trend in overall preschool classroom quality across time.*

Modest increases were found in overall ECERS R and ELLCO scores. There was a significant increase on the "Program Structure" subscale of ECERS-R which includes items such as schedule, free play, group time, and provisions for children with disabilities. There was a significant increase on the "Classroom Observation" subscale of ELLCO from 2006 to 2007, which includes items such as organization of the classroom, contents of the classroom, classroom climate, etc.



5. *High Performing Centers have some similarities.*

Centers performing in the top 25th percentile in overall quality reported similar participation in the KIDS NOW Initiative. Common characteristics of high quality classrooms are shown below:

ECERS-R	ELLCO	ITERS-R
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest percentage of disabilities • Lowest turnover rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest percentage of disabilities • Lowest turnover rate • Highest participation in Community Early Childhood Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest participation in STARS for KIDS NOW • Highest participation in Scholarship program • Highest number of Healthy Start consultations/ trainings • Highest participation in Community Early Childhood Council • Highest percentage of children on subsidy

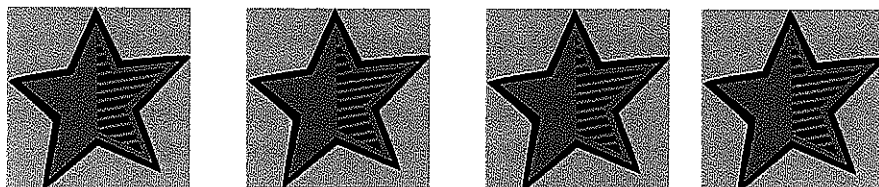
5. *Programs scoring in the lowest 25 percent have similarities.*

Centers performing in the bottom 25th percentile in overall quality reported similar participation in the KIDS NOW Initiative. Common characteristics of low quality classrooms are shown below:

ECERS-R	ELLCO	ITERS-R
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest participation in STARS for KIDS NOW • Highest percentage of minority children enrolled • Highest percentage of children on subsidy • Lowest percentage of children with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest participation in STARS for KIDS NOW • Lowest Community Early Childhood Council involvement • Lowest turnover rate • Lowest percentage of minority children enrolled • Highest percentage of children on subsidy • Lowest percentage of children with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest participation in STARS for KIDS NOW • Lowest Scholarship participation • Lowest number of Healthy Start consultations/trainings • Highest turnover rate • Highest percentage of minority children • Lowest percentage of children with disabilities

Evaluation Team Recommendations

- Early care and educational policy initiatives need to be directed toward programs serving children on subsidy (e.g. participation in STARS for KIDS NOW, improved ratios, increased education for child care providers and directors).
- Continue to highlight potential benefits of participation in the early care and education components of the Initiative. Outcomes associated with the participation in the Initiative should be emphasized.
- Training and technical assistance services should continue to focus on supporting programs that serve minority children and children on subsidy.
- Continued efforts should focus on the educational advancement of teachers and program directors, as educational level is highly correlated with program quality and child outcomes.



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